without the direction of the chief. Usually, a janmi family remained in situ over many generations. In addition, the janmi was obliged to lease off on long term tenure a large part of his lands to Nayar retainers and could not retract these without the tenant's consent or without the aid of a public assembly of tenants in case of ill-doing on the part of one of them.

Traditional villages are classifiable therefore as 1) Braham; 2) Temple; 3) Royal; 4) Chiefly; 5) Nayar headmen's villages. In some areas, a group of villages of the same type might be found adjacent to each other; this was particularly the case with "Brahman" and "Nayar headmen's" villages, where four or five might form a cluster headed by janmis of the same subcaste. [17] In each village, subordinate to the janmi's lineage in ritual rank and administrative power, came the members of one or other subcaste of Nayar retainers. Nayar retainers, whom I shall also call Military Nayars since most of them were soldiers, were divided into three subcaste: 1) retainers of Nambudiri Brahmans and of temples, called Sudra Nayars in Calicut and Walluvanad and Illath Sudra Nayars in Cochin; 2) retainers of the royal lineage, or "palanquin-bearers," called Pallichans in all three kingdoms; and 3) retainers of the chiefs and the Nayar village headmen, called Charna Nayars in Calicut and Walluvanad and Swaroopattil Sudra Nayars in Cochin. Each of these subcastes disputed for ritual rank and in everyday circumstances would not interdine with each other. This dispute for rank was possible because they

564 within a few feet. Equal interdining took place
[244] only between members of the same caste or sub-
• caste, but at a higher caste feast members of lower castes might receive food from higher caste hosts. The Nambudiris, royalty, chiefs, temple servants, retainers, middle-class and servant Nayars thus collectively formed the
[611] "good" castes of the society. Nambudiris and two small castes of their temple servants were patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal. (1)

[361] Below all these castes, living in a separate
[783] part of the village, were the "low" or "polluting" castes. These included in order of rank, Iravas or toddy-tappers and tenant-farmers, with 20 to 50 households per village; Kanisans (astrologers) with one to three households per village; the artisan castes (blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, bell-metal workers and stone-masons, who ranked equally) each with one to three houses per village; low caste washermen and barbers (who ranked equally) each with one to five houses per village; and bow-makers, each
[611] with about one to ten houses per village. Iravas,
[595] Kanisans, washermen and barbers had double
[614] unilineal descent: [25] patrilineal, patrilocal extended families with fraternal polyandrv, cross-c cut by large exogamous dispersed matrilineal clans. Artisans and bow-makers had patrilineal descent with patrilocal extended families and
[437] fraternal polyandry. All of these castes worked for each other and for the "good" castes of the
524 village. Iravas, the most numerous and influen-
427 tial, owned their own house-sites and leased rice-lands and other garden lands from the matrilineal

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AW11 Kerala AW11
North Kerala Nayar

and her children were not illegitimate unless she had relations with a man of low caste.

A woman normally lived with her husband in his ancestral home or in a separate house on his ancestral land. He then owed her physical protection and at least a part of her food and clothing, in return for limited domestic services. Occasionally a man might choose to visit his wife in her ancestral home if she lived nearby. In this case he might work on her ancestral land or bring periodic provisions of grain and clothing to her and her children. He would eat sometimes in his ancestral house and sometimes in the house of his wife. In all marriages a husband was obliged to pay the full expenses of delivery when his wife bore a child in her ancestral home and, additionally, to supply grain and other food to her throughout the six months which she spent in her taravād at this time.

A woman owed respect and obedience to her husband. He had the right to scold or even to beat her if she disregarded his wishes. Polygyny was permitted and was fairly common among village headmen, chiefs, and royalty. The polygynous husband usually provided separate houses for his wives on his ancestral estate.

Theoretically, either party might divorce the other at will, but in fact it was usually the husband who initiated a divorce. We do not know how common divorce was in the traditional period. At present it is rare in wealthy landowning lineages, although it probably takes place rather more frequently than among aristocratic Mappillas of North Kerala. It is more usual among the poorer Nambiar commoners, although probably less frequent than among the poorer Tiyyars of this area.

Widows might remarry freely by traditional law. Today it is somewhat rare for a widow to remarry if she has children under the age of three or four; we do not know whether this was the case traditionally. A widow who does remarry almost invariably leaves her children by the first marriage behind in her taravād, in the care of her mother or some other older natal kinswomen. Such children may visit their mother in their stepfather's house but they have no customary rights of maintenance there, and it is considered that their own taravād is the correct place for them to live.

Thus in North Kerala, by contrast with Central Kerala, differences of paternity may create structural divisions among the children born of one mother. All are of the same taravād and share the same fundamental birth-status rights, but if their fathers were different they

564 The Kurup, Nambiyâr, Viyyûr, Mânavallan, Vengôlan, Nelliôden, Adungâdi, Kitâvu, Adiôdi, Âmayengolam, all superior clans, belong, properly speaking, to North Malabar. The Kiriyattil, or Kiriyam, said to be derived from the Sanskrit graham, a house (a doubtful derivation) is the highest of all the clans in South Malabar, and is supposed to comprise or correspond with the group of clans just named of North Malabar. In the old days every Nâyar chief had his Châmavar, or adherents. The Purattu Châma are the *outside* adherents, or the fighters, and so on, and the Akattu Châma are *inside* adherents—clerks and domestics. The clan from which the former were drawn is superior to the latter. The Urâli are said to have been masons; the Pallichans, mancheel* bearers.†

The Vattakkâd clan, whose proper métier is producing gingelly or cocoanut oil with the oil mill, is the lowest of all excepting, I think, the Pallichan. Indeed, in North Malabar, I have frequently been told by Nâyars of the superior clans that they do not admit the Vattakkâd to be Nâyars, and say they have adopted the honorific affix "Nâyar" to their names quite recently. It seems rather [141] odd that this clan, or at any rate one sub-clan of it is almost the tallest and has the finest nasal index, being the only clan whose nasal index is finer than that of the Nambûtiri.

564 Union by marriage, or whatever the function may be called, is permissible between most of the other clans, 582 the rule which was noticed already under "Nambûtiris"‡ by which a woman may never unite herself with her inferior, being always observed. That is, she may unite 564 herself with a man of her own clan or with a man of any superior clan, or with a Nambûtiri, an Embrântiri or any other Brâhman, or with one of the small sects coming between the Brâhmans and the Nâyars, but she cannot under any circumstances unite herself with a man of a [264] clan which is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with [851] others of a clan inferior to hers. A man may, and does [613] without restriction. Her children, by an equal in race and not only in mere social standing, but never by one

[493] * A mancheel is a conveyance carried on men's shoulders, more like a hammock *slung* on a pole, with a flat covering over it, than a palankeen. The palankeen is unknown in Malabar.

† There is in the Cochin state a clan, Elâyadan, which is practically equal in status to the Nambûtiri.

‡ Madras Government Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1.

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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VATTAKKÂD NÂYARS.

There is some obscurity in the sub-divisions of this clan. To the north of Calicut, in Kurumbranâd, they are divided into the Undiâtuna, or "those who pull" (to work the oil machine by hand) and the "Muri-Vechchu-â tune," or "those who tie or fasten bullocks" (to work the oil machine by means of bullocks and not by hand); yet farther north, Tellicherry and thereabouts there are no known sub-divisions; while in Ernâd, to the eastward, these names are quite unknown, and the clan is divided into the "Veluttâtu," the White, and the "Karuttâtu," the Black. It has been remarked already (page 82) that the Vattakkâd (those who turn round) are not always admitted to be true Nâyars. In the extreme north of Malabar they are called Vaniyan—oil monger. The "White" have nothing to do with expression and preparation of oil, which is the hereditary occupation of the Black. The "White" may eat with Nâyars of any clan; the Black can eat with no others outside their own clan. The Black sub-clan is strictly endogamous. The other, the superior sub-clan, is not. Their woman may marry with men of any other clan, the Pallichchan excepted. But not *vice versâ*. The men must marry within their own sub-clan. I think, but am not sure a man of this clan may marry a woman of the Pallichchan clan; but even if such an alliance is permissible anywhere, I do not think it ever takes place. It may be taken as accurate that men of the clan always marry within their own sub-clan, and that women of the superior sub-clan very often mate with Nâyars of superior clans.

In taking the measures I made no distinction between the sub-clans; it was only just before completion that the existence of the sub-clans was discovered. Had the important fact been discovered earlier, the sub-clans would have been separated. Though scarcely enough for scientific accuracy, it is tolerably certain that most, if not all, of those examined were of the superior sub-clan, which is exogamous as regards the women. The inferior section of the clan—the Black—is not to be found north of the Korapuzha river in North Malabar. One quarter of my subjects were measured in North Malabar—Cannanore, Tellicherry, Badagara; and for the rest, in some cases it is noted that the individuals are of the superior section. This accounts pretty correctly for rather more than half. I am tolerably certain that the other half also belonged to it.

564* 564 128 141 564*

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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RELIGION.

It will be easier to convey a rational conception of the religion of the Nâyars, not by what is written but by what is left out; so we will proceed on this plan. The ceremonies connected with marriage and death go far towards indicating what are their religious ideas in general. The conservative character of the people of Malabar whose country is an earthly paradise, severed from the major portion of the Indian peninsula by the high mountains of the Western Ghâts, secure in its happy seclusion, where Nature has lavished her gifts with the prodigality of a Bacchante, prepares us for finding much of the primitive element in their religion. With the more uncultivated, the wilder races, this is almost entirely primitive in character; no more the cult of a Siva or Vishnu than of Sqaktktquaclt.

As has been remarked already ("Nambûtiris" Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I), we see in Malabar the most undiluted form of the highest, the most abstract religion of Southern India, side by side with the most entirely primitive. The Nâyars have much of both.

The saying, "cleanliness is next to godliness," is one of those which contain much more real wisdom than is usually apprehended. The world is really divided, as I think Mr. Havelock Ellis points out, between the dirty and the clean; and, if I err not, the same author tells us that clothed man cannot be truly clean. Man has advanced far in development when he has become a clean animal. Now the Nâyars' religion is one of cleanliness, undiminished by superabundant clothing. Men and women can scarcely wear less than they do in compatibility with the received ideas of decency and propriety, nor can they be more scrupulous in the matter of personal cleanliness. No Nâyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It is a rule seldom broken that every Nâyar goes to the temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed; generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Polayan or any inferior being, even a Tîyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandalwood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about 99 years ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching

796
411 called nândakam smeared with white (probably sandal-wood) paste. The shape of this sword is given in the illustration. To its edge, at intervals of a few inches, are fastened tiny bells, so that, when it is shaken, there is a general jingle.

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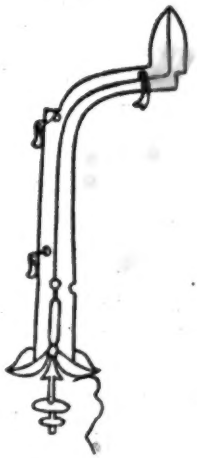

[273]

But just before the procession begins there is something for the Tîyans to do. Four men of this caste, having with them Pûkkalasams (flower-kalasams) and five having with them Jannakalasams (?) run along the west, north, and east, sides of the temple (outside the enclosure) shouting and making a noise more like the barking of dogs than anything else. The kalasams contain arrack which is presently given to the temple to be used in the ceremonies. Members of certain families [465] only are allowed to perform in this business, and for what they do each man receives five edangâlis of rice from the temple and a small piece of the flesh of the goat to be [264] sacrificed later. These nine men eat only once a day [834] during the festival; they do no work, remaining quietly at home unless when at the temple; they cannot approach [841] any one of caste lower than their own; they cannot cohabit with women; and they cannot see a women in menstruation during these days. A crowd of Tîyans join more or less in this, rushing about and barking like dogs, making a hideous noise. They too have kalasams, and, when they are tired of rushing and barking, they drink the arrack in them. These men are always under vow. [782] In doing what they do, they fulfil their vow for the benefit they have already received from the goddess—cure from sickness as a rule. To the west of the temple is a circular 796 pit—it was called the fire-pit, but there was no fire in 564 it—and this pit all the Tîyan women of the neighbourhood circumambulate, passing from west round by north, three times, holding on the head a pewter plate on which are a little rice, bits of plantain leaves and cocoanut, and a burning wick. As each women completes her third round, she stands for a moment at the western side, facing east, and throws the contents of the plate into the

796 the nature, auspicious or otherwise, of the first things that he
777 happens to fix his eyes upon on this particular morning. According to Nair and even general Hindu Mythology there are certain objects which possess an inherent inauspicious character. For instance ashes, firewood, oil and a lot of similar objects are inauspicious ones which will render him who chances to notice them first fare badly in life for the whole year, and their obnoxious effects will be removed only on his seeing holy things, such as, reigning princes, oxen, cows, gold and such like ones on the morning of the next New Year. Whereas wholesome and favourable consequences can be produced by the sight of auspicious objects like those just enumerated. The effects of the sight of these various materials are said to apply even to the attainment of objects by a man starting on a special errand who happens for the first time to look at them after starting. However, with this view, almost every family religiously takes care to prepare the most sight-worthy objects on the New Year morning. Therefore, on the previous night they prepare what is known, in native phraseology, as a *kani*. A small circular bell-metal vessel is taken and some holy objects are systematically arranged inside it. A Grandha or old book made of palmyra leaves, a gold ornament, a new-washed clothe, some "unprofitably gay" flowers of the *Konna* tree, a measure of rice, a so-called looking-glass made of bell-metal, and a few other things, are all tastefully arranged in the vessel and placed in a prominent room inside the house. On either side of this vessel two brass or bell-metal lamps filled with cocoanut oil "clear as diamond sparks" are kept intensely burning and a small plank of wood or some other seat is placed in front of it. At about 5 o'clock in the morning of the day some one who has got up first wakes up the inmates, both male and female, of the house and takes them blindfolded so that they may not gaze at anything else, to the seat near the Kani. The members are seated one after another in the seat and are then and not till then asked to open their eyes and carefully look at this Kani. Then each is made to look at some venerable member of the house or sometimes a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins of the house begin to fire small crackers which they have bought
[735] and stored for the occasion. The Kani is then taken round the place from house to house for the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the carelessly confused noise of the crackers the morning breaks and preparations are begun for the morning
[264] meal. This meal is in some parts confined to rice-kanji with a
[262] grand appendage of other eatable substances and in others to ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case on grand scales.

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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796 the tank for the purpose. Then all or almost all of these plunge
533 in the water and begin to take part in the singing that is pre-
[515] sently to follow. One of these then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song chiefly pertaining to Cupid. This singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought down in a slanting direction and struck against its surface. So that the water is completely ruffled and is splashed in all directions producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound and then the leader stops a while for the others to follow her in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza, with another at the same time beating on the water and so on until the conclusion of the song. Then all of them make a long pause and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of dawn when they rub themselves dry and come home to dress themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire. They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee; and sometimes with a superficial coating of antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red marks lower down the middle of their foreheads close to the part where the two eyebrows near one another. They also chew betel and thus redden their mouths
[526] and lips. Then they proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro, on what is usually known as an Uzhinjal.*

796 "On the festival day after the morning bath is over, they
264 take a light meal and in the noon the family-dinner is voraciously attacked; the essential and almost universal ingredients of which
262 being ordinary ripe plantain fruits and a delicious preparation
[535] of arrow-root powder purified and mixed with jaggery or sugar and also cocoanut. Then till evening dancing and merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in.

796 "The husband population are inexcusably required to be present in the wives' houses before evening as they are bound
[586] to do on the Onam and Vishu occasions; failure to do which is looked upon as a step or rather the first step on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separation or divorce from the
[132] wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during
[515] which commonly the festival falls, heightened inevitably by the constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths and their frolics in water. The biting cold of

* A swing made of bamboo.

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

marriage rite. At the auspicious time, each girl was led in turn by her brother from the house and seated on the plank. At a sign from the astrologer, the Brahman priest (called Elayad, a low sub-caste of Nambûdiris who officiate at Nayar funerals) handed the *tâli* to the bridegroom, who tied it round the girl's neck. The nineteen couples were then secluded in the house for the remaining three days and nights of the rites. Informants said that in modern times when lineages were often large, the couples numerous and the girls sometimes infants, cohabitation would be unlikely. It was not, however, forbidden, and appears formerly to have been required. It is clear that the rite was ritually if not actually a defloration ceremony, as is indicated by the saying *Tâli kettiu amma âyi* ('having had the *tâli* tied, a girl becomes a [married] woman').

Next morning the party reassembled without the couples, and offerings to Bhagavadi took place. The participants were a Sûdra Nayar oracle (*velichchappâd*), a Vattekad (oil-monger) Nayar sacrificial priest, and a Nayar boy who accompanied the oracle, carrying a staff to the top of which was tied a brush of coconut flowers. These officiants perform similarly by hereditary right at the annual Bhagavadi temple festival. The priest offered rice, paddy, coconuts, incense, a burning lamp, and toddy before the branch of the milk-tree, following which he sacrificed a cock and poured out a vessel of red blood-like liquid. The oracle then donned a waist-band and anklets of bells and took a sickle in his hand. (These symbolize the power of Bhagavadi: when he dons them it is believed that she enters and possesses the oracle.) Accompanied by loud music, he leapt wildly in the air, shouting hoarsely and chopping his forehead with the sickle till blood flowed down. In this frenzy he called out to the host *kâranavan* that the goddess was appeased by his offerings. His possession then subsided and his insignia were removed.

Bhagavadi is the Malabar goddess of war, smallpox, and the soil. Her idol, in the Nayar village temple, is a hollow cylindrical stone, a symbol of the vagina, as the Brahmanical idol of Siva is the lingam, a symbol of the phallus. Bhagavadi is also worshipped as the oracle's sickle, as a picture drawn in chalks on the floor, as the milk-tree (*Alstonia scholaris*), and as the ancestral sword of a Nayar lineage. She is believed to have protected the Nayars in war. She is fierce and vengeful, her chief power being to inflict smallpox. She is propitiated by similar rites during smallpox epidemics, on the sixteenth day after a smallpox death, and on the last night of her annual temple festival, during which she is angry with the villagers who must observe sexual continence.

The remainder of the second day, and the third day, were devoted to feasting and music. On the fourth morning each couple went to the village bathing pool where, hand-in-hand, they took a purifying plunge-bath. Then, decked in fine clothes, they returned to the lineage house. In the kitchen each couple ate a meal from the same loaf. The company was then fed, but on this day, alone of all days, women ate before men. The bridegrooms received clothing and foodstuffs from the *kâranavan* and departed for their respective homes.

In Pâlakkara the *tâli*-tier might remain with his bride as her first *sambandham* lover. At the last *tâli*-rite two of the nineteen bridegrooms remained in association with their brides, though one abandoned his shortly afterwards. The other seventeen girls formed unions with other men of the village shortly after puberty. In all *tâli*-rites in this area, however, the 'bridegroom' remained the ritual husband of his 'bride' throughout his life, though he need never visit her again. At his death, the 'wife', together with her children by whatever physiological father, must observe fifteen days' pollution. Death pollution was otherwise traditionally observed only for matrilineal kin: not until recently was it observed for the *sambandham* lover and the physiological father. The *tâli*-tier of a woman was regarded, moreover, as the ritual father of her children. If they knew him, the children called this man *appan* (the Tamil word for 'father', used for the *genitor* by Tiyyars and Christians) as distinct from *acchan* (originally

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

unless he has been admitted by certain formalities to the village to which he has emigrated, is considered to belong to his original home.

The village is divided into two *Karas* (or *Amsams*), the northern *Kara* and the southern *Kara*. The division is arbitrary and has no significance. A man from Kavalam belonging to the North or South *Kara* is treated in another village as belonging to the same place.

The *Bhagavati* (goddess) Temple in the village was, before the government took possession of it, owned by *two Karas jointly*.

In each of the *Karas* there are five *Āsāns* or *Pramanis*. They keep *Kalaris* and are honoured and respected by all the Nāyars in the district. No common Nāyar is allowed to sit in their presence, to enter their kitchen, or to call their women without the title of *Kunjamma* (or Ladyship).

The seventy-five families which the *Kara* contains are divided between the five *Āsāns*. Each *Āsān*, therefore, has a general authority over all the families, and special rights over the fifteen families immediately under his control.

In all matters of ceremony the *Āsāns* have to be informed beforehand. Without their presence, no public ceremony of any family is supposed to be valid. All the public functions of the village are done by them. The ceremonies of the temple, for example, are under their control. They are the people who summon the *Karakkars*, or the villagers, to assemble and settle matters of importance. The villagers settle in such assemblies, things relating to the community, such as public festivals, the expenditure of *Karayogam* (common to the village) funds and the behaviour of people who have acted against the customs of the village. If a marriage ceremony had not been properly conducted, it comes before them. If an *Āsān* had not been properly invited, that matter also comes up for consideration. Instances of punishments inflicted by the village on individuals and families were not uncommon till lately. I remember a particular case in which the villagers as a body led by their *Āsān* walked out of the marriage (*Talikettu*) *pandal* because the order of precedence was not kept up. The family of a squire had, during these hard days, become poor, and a rich squire who, in order of precedence, came below him was given a seat of honour. The result was that the whole community walked out as a protest, and the *Kalyanam* had to be held over again to the satisfaction of the poor *Āsān* and his loyal friends.

How strong this organisation is will be seen from the following incident. A gentleman, when coming from Madras, had a Christian friend with him, and his servant who waited for him at Alleppey was eating his food when both of them entered the boat. It is a very rigid custom that no food can be taken in the company, or even in the proximity of any lower caste, and Christians are considered to be such. The result of it was that when they got home the news got abroad that the Nāyar servant had eaten with a Christian in the boat, and the whole village

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

264 626 564 was in a state of terrible fury. It was only with great trouble that they were persuaded not to excommunicate the poor man.

621 198 The Nāyar life and customs can be rightly understood only in the light of their village organisation. The enormous influence the opinion of the village has in all matters connected with their social, as well as their family, life is the main reason of the persistence of the Nāyars as a vigorous and healthy community in spite of strong economic pressure, merciless competition and fast changing conditions. It is also due to this system of organised life that the customs of sexual relationship and marriage, which look so loose and immoral on paper, are found actually to be decent and tolerable. The Nāyar community is not more immoral than any other community in the world. The restraining influence among them does not come from actual written law, as among the Hindus of other parts of India, or from a belief in any social philosophy present in the mind of at least the leaders of thought. It comes from the strong feeling of social propriety which the village has developed to a very high degree.

III.—FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE NĀYARS.

613 [425] The Nāyar family consists of all the descendants from the same ancestress, counting relationship exclusively from the side of the mother. Theoretically it may contain all those who have a common ancestry of this kind, but, in practice, when families grow unwieldy, they divide the common property and live under different roofs. Ordinary families consist of relations four or five degrees removed. The numerical strength of the family varies. In old and aristocratic families one finds sometimes fifty to eighty people, though one or two families can be mentioned in Malabar which contain one hundred and fifty to two hundred people.

The undivided family generally lives under the same roof. In the house itself only the females live, while the male members of the family occupy rooms set apart for them, or, if they are rich, live in houses in neighbouring compounds. The Nāyar 351 613 house has always a large piece of enclosed ground in front of it, which is called *Muttam*. Often it is used as an ornamental garden, and no man of the lower caste may enter it. There the children walk about and play in daytime, and the women have their dance and general merriment in the evening. Behind the house is a [564] vegetable garden and a bathing tank, which is reserved exclusively for women. The dominant idea in the arrangement of the house is the proper separation of sexes in the family.

613 421 [179] The family owns property in common. What a private individual earns belongs to him exclusively, but when he dies it is joined to the rest of the family, according to the old Nāyar law which is still prevalent in some parts.[1] When the

[1] Legal tendency has been to modify this practice.

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as *Ammari Amma*, the first word being the same as the wife of the mother's brother, and the second an honorific addition to it. Dr. Rivers, in *Kinship and Social Organisation*, as well as in *Melanesian Society*, has conclusively shown that wherever first-cousin marriage prevails, there the mother-in-law has no special name. His explanation that this is due to the obvious fact that, in most cases, the mother's brother's wife is the same person as the mother-in-law, and that the former position was antecedent to the latter, is fully borne out by the terminology among the Nāyars.

Another relation of importance in the Nāyar family life is the father's sister. She has a special name and has a very special function to perform. In Middle Travancore she is called *Appachi*. Her importance varies according to the status of the father's family. If the father's family is one of greater importance than one's own, then the father's sister is a person to be consulted on various matters with regard to the child. In any case she should be the first to visit the new-born child. This is called "*Kannom Kalcha*." In the marriage ceremony also she has a prominent place.

Enangar.—The whole of Nāyar family life used to be based, though this has decayed of late, on the close relationship with one or more other families, spoken of as *Enangar* or Allies. A *Tharawad* with its *Enangars* formed *a social group* rarely marrying outside its fold and generally arranging all festivities and ceremonies between themselves. Neither funeral rites, nor marriage ceremony, nor even any one of the hundred other minor things which go to make up the ordinary life of a Nāyar family, can take place without the co-operation, or at least the presence, of a member from the *Enangar* or allied families. The *Enangar* families are always of the same sub-caste, with a right to eat with you and enter any part of your house.

The *Enangar* system is evidently a kinship organisation, forming an inter-marrying class. The question of its origin is a very difficult one. The prevalent opinion is that it originated in the days when Nāyars fought and farmed in alternate months, when a kinship organisation of some sort was very necessary for safety and success. This organisation has become very lax of late, though it cannot in any way be said to be dying out.

Marriage Restrictions.—The marriage restrictions prevalent among the Nāyars have nothing much peculiar from the rest of the Hindu society. The bride must always be younger than the man, and must in strict orthodoxy belong to the same generation as his. He may not marry his mother's sister's daughter, who is to him as his own sister. All his sisters, own and collateral, together with ladies of a previous generation in his family, form a legal incestuous group. A man has, therefore, to marry either entirely out of the circle of his relations, or from among his *cross-cousins*.

Cross-cousin marriage[1] is the orthodox custom. Your maternal uncle's

[1] By cross-cousins I mean children of brother and sister. The relationship is expressed by the word *Machuna*, which is, it should be noticed, the same as in the Toda language. Among

8:Panikkar I-4,5 (no date) 1918 AWII Kerala AWII Nayar

This is mostly due to two reasons: 434 [182] [245]
First of all, there is the joint family system which provides for all the members without distinction. Secondly, every Nāyar family lives on its own plot of ground on which coco-nut palms are grown, which bring in a small but quite comfortable sum.

The standard of life is comparatively high. Among the richer classes it is 511
fairly decent, even according to the higher material standards of Europe, while, among the poorer clases, it never comes anywhere near the uncleanliness, the misery, the unrefined and uncultured barbarism which is the atmosphere of the slum life of the big cities of Europe. Poverty is less disreputable than in civilised communities, and the difference this makes is immense. The peculiarly civilised idea that success is the criterion of intrinsic merit, and that, consequently, failure by itself proves that it was deserved, is almost totally unheard of among the Nāyars. The fact that [613] [182]
the individual members of a family have to pool their abilities and, to some extent, their personal incomes, prevents the sharp distinction between the rich and the poor which is so characteristic of societies organised on an individual basis.

Food.—The Nāyars are not vegetarians. Like all Hindus, they do not eat 262
beef, but nothing else is prohibited. Fish is a favourite article of food, and there is an old couplet which sings:

> "*Kaṭal vāzhakka Kari yuṭaṭoru vaku* [539]
> *Bhaṭa Bhojana maṭu Kooṭillā.*"
>
> "Then there is a kind of banana of the seas (fish)
> And the Nāyars cannot live without it."

There is another couplet, which says:

> "There is nothing among the various kinds of food which equals the flesh of a boar."

The Nāyars are great epicures and they cook beautifully. Rice, of course, is the staple food, but milk curds, butter and *ghee* are things of equal importance.

Most Nāyar families have three meals a day. The breakfast, among the poor 264 ●
people, consists of rice boiled with water in the form of a pudding. With it is taken 262
as relishes pickles, fried fish, cooked vegetables, etc. The next meal is at noon. The main course, of course, is rice. The first part of it is eaten with butter, boiled peas, and many other relishes. The second course is fish, vegetables, etc., mixed with rice. The third part is eaten with buttermilk, mangoes, and pickles. The supper at night is also a meal of which rice is the chief part. The thing about it is that, though the main course is the same as porridge among the Scotch, the variety, as well as the taste, of the subsidiary dishes is what makes all the difference.

Clothing.—The typical Nāyar (male) clothing is the *Mundu*. This is generally 291
2½ yards long, 1¼ yards broad, cloth of fine texture made at Eraniyal, in South 184
Travancore. Nowadays, people wear cotton cloth from Lancashire, wide the [439]
richer classes go in for Benares silk.

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the highest class. There are many who profess to belong to certain Nambuthiri *illams*, such as the Azhavancheri and other *illams*. They are obliged to be strict vegetarians owing to their service in the Nambuthiri families.

3. *Swarupattil Nayars.*—The members of this class render services to the Kshatriyas. There are, it is said, three minor subdivisions, namely, *Pindiyánmar*, *Patindluvittukar* and *Chitayans*. The members of the first class serve as menials in the houses of Kshatriyas; those of the second have to supply them with everything necessary for the performance of all kinds of ceremonies; and those of the third serve them during pollution. They appear to correspond to the Chàrnavar and Sudras. Swarupattil Nayars or Swarupakkár (from *swarupam*, princely house) are so called because of their service in princely houses or Kshatriya families. They are next in rank to *Illakkars*.

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4. *Agattu and Purattu Charna Nayars.*—The Chàrna Nayars or Chàrnavar who are mostly immigrants from Malabar include the two subdivisions, Agattu Chárnavar and Purattu Chárnavar, "inside and outside retainers," respectively. There are two explanations of the terms. According to one, the Purattu Chárnavar are the armed retainers of the various chieftains, while the Agattu Chárnavar are the personal and domestic servants. According to the other explanation, the distinction refers to their position at *yágams* (sacrifices) at which it is said that various duties inside the *yágasala* or sacrificial pandal are to be performed by the Agattu Chárna Nayars, while the Purattu Chárna Nayars remain on guard outside. In point of social precedence, the Purattu Chárnavar are ranked superior to the Agattu Chárnavar, probably because the latter do not belong to any of the fighting clans. A woman of the former may mate with a man of the latter, but not *vice versa*. Only the men of the two subdivisions may eat together, but the women may mate with men of their own clan or of any other or with a Nambuthiri. The men of this class form *sambandhams* in South Malabar with the Kiriyattil women. The caste-men affix the title of Nayar after their names. There are many of this class found in the State.

[582]

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5. *Menókki and Pattóla Menon.*—Men of these castes serve as accountants in temples and in aristocratic families,

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564 13. *Anduran Nayars.*—These Nayars are the manufacturers of earthenware for use in temples.

14. *Attikurusi Nayars.*—They are the priests who officiate at funeral ceremonies for all sub-castes above them.

In respect of the fourteen subdivisions of the high caste *Sudrás*, it must be said that the non-military classes, namely, the Ottattu Nayars, Chempukotti, Anduran, Pallichán and Vattékád Nayars, have to be treated as an intermediate class of *Sudrás*, because there is neither interdining nor intermarriage between the members of these subdivisions and those treated as high caste *Sudrás*; but they are classed among the high caste *Sudrás* on account of their services in temples, which give them the privilege to enter them and bathe in public tanks. [264] [582]

Under the head of low caste Sudrás are included four sub-castes, namely Tharakans, Velakkathalavans, Veluthédans, and Cháliyans, who pollute other Nayars by touch, and who are on that account called low caste Sudrás. Pollution by touch appears to be the basis for the above classification, and on this principle, the three castes except the Tharakans are treated as low caste *Sudras*; for, their touch pollutes all castes above them. The Tharakans had been a trading class, but they have now taken to other professions. They are a Tamil class and are the least Malayáli to be brought on a level with the high caste Sudrás, though in their customs they are almost like the latter. A similar process of assimilation has been and is still going on among some of the Tamil castes of the Chittur Taluk as well as elsewhere, by which the members of such castes are developing themselves into Nayars.

553 554 The Nayars affix to their names one of the following titles, the origin and significance of which are given below:— Titles.

1. *Kartha.*—The word means a 'doer', and appears to have been used as a title by some of the old Madura kings. The rulers of Cochin are said to have confirmed this title on some influential Nayar families, and made them petty chieftains subject to their paramountcy. All the Karthás belong to the *Illam* division of the Nayar caste. Among the old families in the Cochin State still possessing this title are Chéráncllur Kartha near Ernakulam, Kódasséri Kartha near Chálakudi, and Kuzhupilli Kartha. [551]

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deliberately refused to be a father and deprived himself of the sweet cares involved by the rearing of the children, they were indignant with a girl who refused to be a mother, and those who had not reproduced their species were considered to be subject to terrible punishments in the next world. The old order of things has given place to the new. Many of the old time-honoured customs have already disappeared or begun to disappear. The senior woman is no longer the head of the family, and she has given place to the eldest male member who is known as *kāranavan*. In a joint family which contains a large or fairly a large number of females and males, the former with their children occupy the main building or buildings and the latter live apart in another edifice close to and separated from them. Each of the married women has a room or two; and here her husband visits her. The old women and others occupy the common portion of the house. The boys under age live with their mother under whose care they always are, and the father as a casual visitor does not generally concern himself with the rearing of children. These, after coming of age, join the the adult members, and if they can afford it, live in houses of their own with their wives and children. Where the domestic environments are favourable and the influence of the *kāranavan* (as the father in a patriarchal family) and other senior member prevails, the junior members seldom go wrong. In some cases where such influences do not exist, their conduct is not always satisfactory. The habits of the members are generally regular, and the usual time of rising throughout the year is early dawn. After rising, the males either go to their daily routine, or wait for their morning light meal which they partake after bathing and after worshipping the deity in the local temple. The women attend to their children, look to the domestic minor work, bathe and prepare the breakfast. Great attention is paid to their personal cleanliness. As water is near at hand, men, women, and children take a great pleasure in bathing, which, besides being conducive to cleanliness, is also considered purificatory and curative. Their substantial dinner is, as a rule, a little before midday, and the rest of the day is occupied by the women and others either in the perusal of religious books or in the playing of some indoor game, while visits in the afternoon are also indulged in.

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are also indulged in. In these days of modern civilization, when schools for boys and girls have increased in the State, many take advantage of the instruction imparted in them, so that when the latter become adults, they profitably spend their leisure hours in reading religious and other books. Towards the evening they go to the temple for worshipping and go round it several times, which, though hygienic in its origin, is considered of religious importance. They return home, and their supper is generally before eight o'clock; after this they retire to their rooms, each married woman occupying her separate room or set of rooms. They lie on mats or beds spread on the fioor or on the latter placed on cots with which the rooms are neatly furnished. Such in brief is the family life and organisation of well-to-do families of the Nayars. In poor families in which the members subsist by hard work, the daily routine of life considerably differs from those described above.

Mention has already been made of the *kárnavan*, who is the manager of all affairs in the Nayar family. He is legally responsible for the proper management of the joint property, for the education of the junior members and for everything conducive to the general welfare and happiness of every member of the family. It must be remembered that the family property is joint property and that no member can claim that any portion of it belongs to him or to her, nor can any individual member claim a separate possession or enjoyment of any portion. The ground-work of the system is, that the family property is held in trust for the support of the females and their descendants in the female line. The property is impartible and the family is indissoluble except with the consent of all its members. When, in course of time, the family becomes too unwieldy to be governed and managed by one man, the circumstances and natural forces bring about a division of the family into various distinct sections or families. These separate families keep up the original traditions of their common descent, but have no legal right to the property of one another. The members of the family and their descendants in the female line, thus separated by partition from the main stock, form a *távazhi* (*ta*=mother, *vazhi*=line, *i. e.*, mother's line). They live in a separate building and own that portion of the joint property which is theirs in the partition, and which is managed

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Another peculiar feature of this festival is that all the male and female members of the family sit apart at meals. By mid-day the principal meal is over, and each goes dressed in fine attire now, seeks the amusement most congenial to him. Field-games, such as hand-ball or rounders, personal combats, games of chess, dice, and cards, dancing by females, and music parties constitute the leading forms of enjoyment from morning until evening.

Hand-ball matches.—A small stick is planted at a fixed spot, and the young men divide themselves into two rival parties. A member of one party stands at the post, while the others stand away from it. The ball which is usually made of coir rope is thrown by a member of one of the opposing party, and on its being struck by the man at the post, the others attempt to catch it before the bounce or stop its onward career. If the ball hits the post, or if any member of the opposing party catches the ball before it has touched the ground, that player's turn is over. Another man takes his place and so on, until all the members of one party have had their turn. Then the rival section begins to play exactly in the same manner and under the same rules as before.

Combats are of two kinds, namely, those between single adversaries, and those held in batches. In the first, the people of one locality divide themselves into two parties. When the match is opened, the leader of one group brings forward a trained pugilist who goes into the intervening open space, between the two groups, challenging any one from the opposite camp to meet him in fair fight. A little while after, some one from the other party takes up the challenge, and then the combat begins. The victor is rewarded with presents of cloths and money by the rich and generous members of the community assembled there. The same process is continued till the close of the day. In Palghat the *Onam* games are of a rougher character; the tenants of certain landlords turn out each under their own leader and engage in sham fights in which there is much rough play.

There is also another amusement, in which a peculiar bow, formed of a strong and slightly elastic wood with a split bamboo finely polished for the string, is used. By means of a

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796 [534] stick, it is possible to produce a kind of musical tone, for which a party is organised to play on it. This entertainment is much admired, and interests the people very much.

(2). *Tiruvâtira* :—This is another important national festival, which falls on the *Tiruvâtira* day in Dhanu (December-[776] January). This concerns the Nayar women, and is said to commemorate the death of *Kâma Dêva*, the cupid of Indian mythology, by the burning fire of the third eye of the God [533] Siva. Before day-break the festive day, the young women of the Nayar families hasten to the nearest tank or river for bathing, and during the bath, they amuse themselves with *Tiruvâtira pittu*, songs accompanied by regular splashing of water, supposed to be symbolical of beating of the breast, on account of their grief for Kama's death. At day-break, they return home, and, gaily dressed and adorned, they [526] go to the nearest temple for worship. After a slight breakfast, they proceed to enjoy the *Uzhinjal* (a swinging apparatus made of bamboo and attached to a horizontal branch of a tree). [264] Immense pleasure is taken in this game. The family dinner [262] is at noon, when bananas, sliced and fried in cocoanut-oil, [431] seasoned with salt, are freely distributed among the friends and relatives assembled there. Ripe plantains, and the sweet pre-[263] paration of arrow-root flour purified and seasoned with jaggery or sugar and cocoanuts, also form one of the chief items of the feast.

[804] (3). *Vishu* :—Next in importance to the two great national [777] festivals just described, comes *Vishu* on the first of Medam (March-April), which is the astronomical new year's day; and a man's prosperity during the year is believed to depend on his seeing some good and lucky thing on the *Vishu* morning. It is the custom to prepare on the night previous, what is known as *Kani*. A bell-metal vessel (*uruli*) is taken, and in it are arranged a *grantha* or cadjan manuscript, a gold ornament, a new washed cloth, some flowers of the *konna* tree (Cassia fistula), some coins in a silver cup, a cocoanut cut into two, a cucumber, some mangoes, and a jack-fruit. On either side of the vessel, are also placed two lamps burning, while there is a plank of wood or some other seat placed in front of it. These are placed in the chief room inside the house, and in the morning, the members of the family, one by one, are taken to the

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CHAPTER IV.

THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS

(Continued).

564 771 776 **Religion.** The high caste Nayars profess Hinduism and follow most of the religious practices of the Brahmans whose influence in matters religious as well as social is supreme all over the State. They worship the superior deities of the Hindu pantheon (Siva, Vishnu, and their consorts, as also Ganapati) in *ambalams* or *kshetrams* (temples) of which there are in the State many that have long been in existence. Everywhere in the State, the caste-men and women with their children may be seen going to worship the deities in their local temples both morning and evening after their baths in the [264] public tanks. It is only after this worship that they take their meals, and seldom do they depart from this rule. They also adore the minor deities, namely, Subramanian, Ayyappan, Sástha or Vettakkorumakan, Bhagavati, as well as Kali, the goddess of small-pox, and malignant demons, such as, Kutti-cháttan, Mundian, Gulikan, Gantákaranan. But these deities [346] or demons are located in *kávus*, mere unpretentious structures with the characteristic tiled roofs and ornamental gables. [532] These deities are represented by carved or uncarved pieces of stone placed on elevated seats beneath the *ál* (Ficus religiosa), the *pala* (Echites scholaris), or the *kánniram* (strychnos), and the priest is usually a non-Vedic Namburi, an Elayad, a Músad, [782] or one of the Sudra castes. The deities such as Subramanian and others above mentioned, are the sons of Siva, and require no animal sacrifices, but the host of demons require to be propitiated with offerings of goats, or fowls, while their wishes are often interpreted by oracles, who are known as *velichapads*.

The Cochin State, as well as Malabar and Travancore, is the land of magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, and as well as

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464 564 [212] The Nayars are the second in the list of the castes as regards learning, and only five per cent. of the population belong to the learned professions, but they are found in all departments of public service. The community is now availing itself largely of the benefits of modern education, and the members are fast becoming conspicuous in every walk of life. In every department of the State, in all the learned professions, they form a respectable majority, and the only people who successfully compete with them are the Brahman immigrants from the other coast. Though there are extensive landholders and substantial farmers among them, a very large majority of the caste-men are really very poor, being either petty farmers, agricultural labourers or day labourers, earning [357] wages at the rate of four to five annas a day. Even women of the poorer classes do agricultural work. Domestic servants in Hindu families are almost wholly Nayars, but none of them are artisans, weavers or potters.

● 264 [515] [771] **Food.** The Nayars seldom eat before their bath or before worshipping in the temple close at hand. Their meals are generally three in number, namely, breakfast which is taken early in the morning, a midday meal between eleven and twelve, and another between seven and eight in the evening, but this meal is generally taken by children between five and six. The breakfast usually consists of *kanji* or rice 262 gruel with some pickles and *pappadam* (round wafers made of 264 the meal of the kidney-bean). Coffee is becoming popular [272] among the Nayars, and this beverage is now often taken for [556] breakfast in well-to-do families. They do not recognize any danger in the use of it, and individuals of all ages indulge in it, so much so that it is even given to young infants. The midday meal, which is usually served between eleven and twelve o'clock, consists of boiled rice together with a few vegetable curries; and butter-milk mixed with rice is the last course.

Their supper which usually consists of similar preparation [562] is taken between seven and eight at night. The women take their food after the male members of the family. Only a minority of Nayars are strict vegetarians, though there is no prohibition against their eating meat, fish or fowl.

252 556 [357] In large aristocratic families, Brahman cooks are engaged to prepare the meals, but the serving is in some cases done by the members. In other families, on the contrary, the cooks of

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the caste or the grown-up women cook and serve the food to 556
the inmates who sit in the dining hall with their own dishes or with plantain leaves placed before them. In ordinary and poor families the cooking and serving are done by women alone.

In grand festivities in which food is served to a large 574
number of the caste-men, the preparations are similar to those 564
served at Brahman feasts, a full account of which will be given 252
when I deal with them.

The Nayars rank below the Ambalavásis and above the 564
Social status. polluting castes. Even among themselves there are various grades of social precedence, and the members of higher sub-castes do not freely mingle with those of the lower. Men of the higher sub-castes may sometimes eat with those of the lower, but their women never take their meals with those lower to them in the social scale. It is curious to note that in grand feasts and on ceremonial occasions, good many formalities have to be observed in the allocation of seats in the dining hall for guests according to their social status, and any violation of the caste rules or etiquette will end in their abruptly leaving the hall. The touch of the Nayar pollutes the Brahmans, and they themselves in turn are polluted by the touch of the low caste Sudras. The consumption of meat does not entail loss of caste, though many abstain from eating it. They may take or drink water from the wells belonging either to their own caste or the three castes above them. Elayathús are their priests, but sometimes their caste-men also officiate as such, and Nambuthiris give *punnydham* (holy water) to the Nayars under pollution. Being in close contact with the Brahmans, they learn to conduct themselves as the Brahmans do, and their morning and evening baths and their worship in temples are as punctual as those of the priestly class.

[264] [574] [796] [576] [262] [271] [793] [783]

Clothing is of considerable hygienic importance in the life 291
Dress. of a nation, and hygiene plays a considerable part in the dress of a Nayar. A piece of cloth, two to two-and-a-half yards long and one-and-a-half yards broad, is worn round the loins. It must touch the ground or very nearly so, and this method of wearing the cloth gives a simplicity and dignity most suitable to their classic features. A small upper garment is also worn while at home A Nayar always carries an umbrella while walking in the sun, but there is no covering for the head.

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105 563 [795] There is a small community of Jews in Cochin, divided into White, Brown, and Black, the last named being the most numerous. Other Kerala residents are foreigners such as Canarese, Tamils, Arabs, and Europeans.

105 564 783 Untouchability has been made a penal offence by the present Indian Constitution and there is undoubtedly a tendency among the more enlightened in the country to combat its evils and attempt to eradicate it from modern Hindu society. On the other hand, the religious minded (and there are many) maintain that since the Constitution is a secular one and allows full freedom of religious belief and practice, the legislator cannot interfere in questions of caste and untouchability, as these have to do with the religious law and structure of India. The fact is that, today, untouchability is not what it was, but it cannot be said either that it has been done away with altogether. A visitor to Kerala is certainly immediately made aware of this, as many traditional views on what constitutes intercaste pollution and what does not are still very much in evidence. Thus, although a member of the artisan caste, a [784] Kammalan, perhaps no longer pollutes those above him in the hierarchy, [264] atmospherically, at twenty four feet as he used to do, it is nevertheless unthinkable that he should sit down to a meal of cooked rice with a [463] Nambudri, or even for that matter with a Nayar. The aboriginal Nay- [484] adis who still live off begging and hunting may possibly "come into [784] town" now and not have to keep off the roads for fear of polluting other castes merely by being seen within a distance of seventy four feet, but they are not for that admitted to a would-be reformed Indian community in which no distinctions of caste, creed and colour are made any longer; in fact, they themselves, probably out of some sort of perverse attachment to their powers of polluting, refuse to be rehabilitated – as has been attempted by the former government of Travancore – and prefer to carry on with their traditional way of life.

It can thus be safely said that pollution of the higher castes by the lower is very much believed in and guarded against, even in Kerala [841] today. Menstruating women, and also those who have given birth, are [846] still considered to be unclean for a period, varying with the people to whom they belong. And the various kin groups, of which every indiv- [614] idual is a member among the Hindus of Kerala, will equally be con- [846] sidered unclean and polluting for a certain amount of days – diminishing [765] in number in inverse proportion to the height of the caste – after a birth or a death has taken place.

Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected par-

bearers.* The Sūdra clan supplies female servants in the houses of Nambūdiris. The Vattakkād (or Chakkingal : chakku, oil press) clan, whose proper *métier* is producing gingelly or cocoanut oil with the oil-mill, is the lowest of all, excepting, I think, the Pallichan. Indeed, in North Malabar, I have frequently been told by Nāyars of the superior clans that they do not admit the Vattakkād to be Nāyars, and say that they have adopted the honorary affix Nāyar to their names quite recently." There is some obscurity as regards the sub-divisions of the Vattakkād clan. To the north of Calicut, in Kurumbranād, they are divided into the Undiātuna, or those who pull (to work the oil-machine by hand), and the Murivechchu-ātune, or those who tie or fasten bullocks, to work the oil-machine. Yet further north, at Tellicherry and thereabouts, there are no known sub-divisions, while in Ernād, to the eastward, the clan is divided into the Veluttātu (white) and Karuttātu (black). The white have nothing to do with the expression and preparation of oil, which is the hereditary occupation of the black. The white may eat with Nāyars of any clan ; the black can eat with no others outside their own clan. The black sub-clan is strictly endogamous ; the other, the superior sub-clan, is not. Their women may marry men of any other clan, the Pallichchan excepted. Union by marriage, or whatever the function may be named, is permissible between most of the other clans, the rule by which a woman may never unite herself with her inferior being always observed. She may unite herself with a man of her own clan, or with a man of any superior clan, or with a Nambūtiri, an Embrāntiri, or any other Brāhman,

* A manchil is a conveyance carried on men's shoulders, and more like a hammock slung on a pole, with a flat covering over it, than a palanquin.

564 or with one of the small sects coming between the Brāhmans and the Nāyars. But she cannot under any circumstances unite herself with a man of a clan, which
• [264] is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with those of a clan inferior to her; a man may, and does without restriction.
564 Her children by an equal in race and not only in mere
651 social standing, but never those by one who is racially
613 inferior, belong to her taravād.* The children of the inferior mothers are never brought into the taravād of the superior fathers, *i.e.*, they are never brought into it to belong to it, but they may live there. And, where they do so, they cannot enter the taravād kitchen, or touch the women while they are eating. Nor are they allowed to touch their father's corpse. They may live in the taravād under these and other disabilities, but
557 are never of it. The custom, which permits a man
564 to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than
831 himself, and prohibits a woman from exercising the same liberty, is called the rule of anulōmam and pratilōmam. Dr. Gundert derives anulōmām from anu, with lōmam (rōmam), hair, or going with the hair or grain. So pratilōmam means going against the hair or grain. According to this usage, a Nāyar woman, consorting with a man of a higher caste, follows the hair, purifies the blood, and raises the progeny in social estimation.
558 By cohabitation with a man of a lower division (clan)
564 or caste, she is guilty of pratilōmam, and, if the
831 difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family, to prevent the whole
564 family being boycotted. A corollary of this custom
851 is that a Nambūtiri Brāhman father cannot touch his
783 own children by his Nāyar consort without bathing

* Tarwād or taravād, a marumakkathayam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor.

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of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting on anklets, etc. The purōhit (officiating priest) called Elayath (a low class of Brāhmans) then gives the tāli to the Mānavālan, and the family astrologer shouts muhurtham (auspicious hour), and the Manavālan, putting his sword on the lap, ties the tāli round the neck of the girl, who is then required to hold an arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families a Brāhmani sings certain songs intended to bless the couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her presence, a Nāyar, versed in songs, performs the office. The boy and girl are then carried by enangans to a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house, where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in some neighbouring tank (pond) or river, holding each other's hands. After changing their clothes they come home, preceded by a procession. Tom-toms (native drums) and elephants usually form part of the procession, and turmeric water is sprinkled. When they come home, all doors of the house are shut, and the Manavālan is required to force them open. He then enters the house, and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt and female friends of the girl then approach, and give sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the boy, and, after taking their meal together from the same leaf, they proceed to the booth, where a cloth is severed into two parts, and each part given to the Manavālan and girl separately in the presence of enangans and friends. The severing of the cloth is supposed to constitute a divorce." "The tearing of the cloth," Mr. Fawcett writes, "is confined to South Malabar. These are the essentials of the ceremony, an adjunct to which is that, in spite of the divorce, the girl observes

In a recent account of a Nāyar wedding in high life in Travancore, the host is said to have distributed flowers, attar, etc., to all his Hindu guests, while the European, Eurasian, and other Christian guests, partook of cake and wine, and other refreshments, in a separate tent. The Chief Secretary to Government proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom.

The following note on Nāyar pregnancy ceremonies was supplied to Mr. Fawcett by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nāyar. "A woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh month, she (at least among the well-to-do classes) bathes, and worships in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal a small quantity of butter, over which mantrams (consecrated formulæ) have been said by the temple priest, or by Nambūtiris. This is generally done till delivery. Another, and even more important ceremony, is the puli-kuti (drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day and hour are fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins with the planting of a twig of the ampasham tree on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the principal courtyard (natu-muttam) of the taravād. At the appointed hour or muhūrtam, the pregnant woman, after having bathed, and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (vatakini or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastward. The ammayi, or uncle's wife, whose presence on the occasion is necessary, goes to the courtyard, and, plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his

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are then, and not till then, asked to open their eyes, and carefully look at the kani. Then each is made to look at some venerable member of the house, or sometimes a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins of the house begin to fire small crackers, which they have bought and stored for the occasion. The kani 796 is then taken round the place from house to house for the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the noise of the crackers, the morning breaks, and preparations are begun for the morning meal. This meal is [264] in some parts confined to rice kanji (gruel) with a grand [262] appendage of other eatable substances, and in others to ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case on a grand scale. Immediately the day dawns, the heads [431] of the families give to almost all the junior members and servants of the household, and to wives and children, money presents to serve as their pocket-money. In the more numerically large families, similar presents are also made by the heads of particular branches of the same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants. One other item connected with the festival deserves mention. On the evening of the previous day, about [556] four or five o'clock, most well-to-do families distribute [431] paddy or rice, as the case may be, in varying quantities, and some other accessories to the family workmen, whether they live on the family estates or not. In return for this, these labourers bring with them for presentation the fruits of their own labours, such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals (fruit of *Solanum Melongena*), etc., according as their respective circumstances permit. With the close of the midday meal [264] the festival practically concludes. In some families, after

In some families, after
the meal is over, dancing and games of various kinds are carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of the pleasantries incidental to the festival. As on other prominent occasions, card-playing and other games are also resorted to."

On the subject of religion, Mr. Fawcett writes as follows. "No Nāyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It is a rule seldom broken that every Nāyar goes to the temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed; generally twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Pulayan, or any inferior being, even a Tiyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandal-wood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he can enter his house and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about a century ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching a Nāyar would be cut down instantly with a sword; there would be no words. Now that the people of India are inconvenienced with an Arms Act which inhibits sword play of this kind, and with a law system under which high and low are rated alike, the Nāyar has to content himself with an imperious grunt-like shout for the way to be cleared for him as he stalks on imperturbed. His arrogance is not diminished, but he cannot now show it in quite the same way.

"I will attempt a description of the ceremonial observed at the Pishāri kāvu—the Pishāri temple near Quilandy on the coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where Bhagavati is supposed in vague legend to have slain an Āsura or gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which